

Why Tourists Choose Airbnb: A Motivation-Based Segmentation Study

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Daniel Guttentag¹, Stephen Smith², Luke Potwarka³,
and Mark Havitz³

Abstract

Airbnb has grown very rapidly over the past several years, with millions of tourists having used the service. The purpose of this study was to investigate tourists' motivations for using Airbnb and to segment them accordingly. The study involved an online survey completed in 2015 by more than 800 tourists who had stayed in Airbnb accommodation during the previous 12 months. Aggregate results indicated that respondents were most strongly attracted to Airbnb by its practical attributes, and somewhat less so by its experiential attributes. An exploratory factor analysis identified five motivating factors—Interaction, Home Benefits, Novelty, Sharing Economy Ethos, and Local Authenticity. A subsequent cluster analysis divided the respondents into five segments—Money Savers, Home Seekers, Collaborative Consumers, Pragmatic Novelty Seekers, and Interactive Novelty Seekers. Profiling of the segments revealed numerous distinctive characteristics. Various practical and conceptual implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords

Airbnb, sharing economy, disruptive innovation, diffusion of innovations, segmentation

Introduction

Every night, hundreds of thousands of tourists choose not to stay in a traditional tourism accommodation, such as a hotel, but rather stay in the residence of a stranger found online via Airbnb. The basic phenomenon of locals informally renting lodging to tourists has existed for centuries, but new Internet and mobile technologies have revolutionized this practice and allowed it to scale dramatically by facilitating virtual markets where communication and trust are established between hosts and guests (Guttentag 2015). Airbnb accommodations typically involve an entire home (e.g., apartment, house), or a private room in a residence where the host is also present. The Airbnb website (www.airbnb.com) is quite straightforward: a prospective guest searches based on destination, travel dates, and party size; the website returns a list of available spaces that can be refined by attributes like price, neighbourhood, and amenities; and then individual listings can be selected for greater detail, including a description, photographs, and reviews from previous guests.

Airbnb and other peer-to-peer short-term rental companies (e.g., HomeAway, Wimdu) represent part of the broader “sharing economy” (also sometimes called “collaborative consumption”). The sharing economy is often associated with Internet and mobile technologies, and it involves consumers maintaining access to goods and services without owning them (e.g., bike-sharing), and ordinary individuals renting out or otherwise offering access to their underused

assets (e.g., ride-hailing services like UberX) (Belk 2014; Botsman and Rogers 2010). The recent global economic recession helped catalyze the sharing economy, but it is also rooted in values related to sustainable consumption and community connectedness (Botsman and Rogers 2010; Chase 2015; Stephany 2015).

The rise of Airbnb and other peer-to-peer short-term rental services within the sharing economy represents a transformative innovation within the tourism accommodation industry. By the summer of 2016 more than 100 million guests had used Airbnb (Chafkin and Newcomer 2016), and the service boasted over two million global listings (Airbnb 2016). While it remains a topic of considerable debate, traditional accommodations increasingly are viewing Airbnb as a significant threat (e.g., Martin 2016).

¹Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

²Hospitality, Food, and Tourism Management, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada

³Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Corresponding Author:

Daniel Guttentag, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University, TRS 3-062, 575 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M5G 2C5, Canada.

Email: dguttent@ryerson.ca

Because Airbnb is quite new, very limited research has investigated the important question of why tourists use it. Moreover, the existing research has portrayed Airbnb guests as a homogeneous group, thereby overlooking the likelihood that Airbnb users can be divided into market segments based on their reasons for choosing the service. In fact, Airbnb listings are quite varied and the potential appeals of Airbnb include both practical advantages and experiential facets that may not generally go hand-in-hand, so the Airbnb market is particularly suited for segmentation. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to investigate tourists' motivations for using Airbnb accommodations, and to segment them accordingly. A better understanding of guests' motivations for using Airbnb, and of the segments identified and profiled, can offer valuable marketing insights for Airbnb, its hosts, and competing accommodation firms. Only with a clear understanding of consumers' reasons for choosing Airbnb can these various entities make informed decisions regarding how best to market toward Airbnb's users, and even whether or not such marketing efforts are worthwhile. The findings also are useful for destination marketing organizations and other tourism firms, as Airbnb guests' motivations for using the service (e.g., seeking local authenticity) may highlight more general characteristics of their consumer preferences.

Literature Review

Motivation-Based Market Segmentation

Segmentation is the process by which a market is divided into groups that are internally similar in a meaningful way. Segmentation serves as an important strategic tool for tourism marketers, providing them with actionable insights on targeting, positioning, and competitive analysis (Dolinicar 2012). In post hoc segmentation, quantitative data analysis techniques generate a classification system based upon a collection of variables, often focusing on consumers' purchase motivations (Dolnicar 2002).

The term *motivation* has been defined in different ways, but essentially refers to the reasons why someone engages in a particular behavior (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, and Best 2007). Tourism literature generally has adopted Dann's (1977, 1981) push-pull motivation framework that recognizes both the internal drives that inspire someone to travel ("push factors") and the particular characteristics of a certain travel product that persuade the traveler to choose it ("pull factors"). While conceptually distinct, push and pull factors are often closely related (Kim, Noh, and Jogaratnam 2007). This study focused on tourists' choice of Airbnb as pertaining to particular characteristics of Airbnb accommodations, and was therefore focused on pull motivations, although several of the motivation items were related to push factors.

Push motivations are aligned with a more precise conceptualization of motivation (or motive), common within psychology, consumer behavior, and some tourism literature, as

an inner force or drive to satisfy an internal need (e.g., Gnoth 1999; Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, and Best 2007). As Dann (1981) even acknowledged, "[Push motivation] deals with tourist motivation *per se*" (p. 190). In contrast, pull motivations are more aligned with the idea that consumers choose products to seek certain benefits, and such benefits also serve as a common basis for customer segmentation (Haley 1968). There is little consensus within the tourism literature regarding the distinction between (pull) motivations and benefits. The present study is positioned as "motivation-based" because the motivation terminology is somewhat more common within tourism literature, and some of the motivation items considered were related to push factors.

Tourism studies segmenting on the basis of motivations (or benefits) have often focused on visitation of a particular destination, attraction, or event. Motivation (or benefit)-based segmentation studies on accommodation choice are much more limited. Chung et al. (2004) used benefits sought to segment independent business travelers staying in luxury Seoul hotels, Inbakaran and Jackson (2005) used motivations and some other variables to segment visitors to Australian hotel resorts, and Khoo-Lattimore and Prayag (2015) segmented "girlfriend getaway" travelers based on their preferences for different accommodation attributes.

Motivations to Use Airbnb

Tourists' motivations for choosing Airbnb have been investigated by a handful of studies: Lamb's (2011) unpublished master's thesis based on interviews with CouchSurfing and Airbnb hosts, Guttentag's (2015) conceptual examination of Airbnb through the lens of disruptive innovation, Tussyadiah's (2015) and Tussyadiah and Pesonen's (2016) surveys of peer-to-peer short-term rental users from the perspective of collaborative consumption, Quinby and Gasdia's (2014) survey of peer-to-peer short-term rental users (for the tourism research company Phocuswright; see Hennessey 2014), and Nowak et al.'s (2015) survey of Airbnb users (for the financial services company Morgan Stanley). These studies have identified a range of potential motivations. Price (or economic benefits) has been recognized by all of the studies listed above, sometimes as the most important motivator (Nowak et al. 2015; Tussyadiah 2015) but other times as somewhat less important (Lamb 2011; Quinby and Gasdia 2014). Household amenities and space have additionally been acknowledged in several studies and actually were the two top motivations found by Quinby and Gasdia (2014). Authenticity also has been highlighted by several studies, including by Lamb (2011), who posed it as the primary driver of Airbnb use, and by Nowak et al. (2015), who found it to be one of the strongest motivations. Also, Guttentag (2015) viewed interacting with locals as a part of authenticity, but Tussyadiah (2015) and Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016) positioned such interaction separately, as part of a social benefit enjoyed from using Airbnb. Tussyadiah (2015) also

highlighted the importance of sustainability as a motivation to use Airbnb. Finally, Nowak et al. (2015) considered location, which they actually found to be the second most important motivation.

These studies provide some valuable insights into why tourists choose Airbnb, but this body of research also suffers from numerous limitations. It is a fairly small body of literature with minimal peer-reviewed empirical research, and the studies have reached somewhat incongruent conclusions. Additionally, the studies have tended to be limited in the breadth of possible motivations they considered. Furthermore, several of the studies examined peer-to-peer short-term rentals in general, instead of a particular company like Airbnb, which may have obfuscated findings because of dissimilarities between different peer-to-peer short-term rental services. Finally, all of the studies viewed Airbnb users as homogeneous, rather than as members of potential motivation-based market segments. The present research, therefore, provides a valuable contribution to this area of inquiry by considering a broad range of motivations, by focusing specifically on Airbnb, and by recognizing the potential for different motivation-based segments of Airbnb users.

Tourism Accommodation Choice

Although very few studies have focused on Airbnb choice, myriad researchers have investigated tourism accommodation choice more broadly. Most of this research has examined hotel choice, frequently with respondents rating the importance of different hotel attributes (e.g., Lockyer 2005; Sohrabi et al. 2012). This literature has identified a variety of key attributes influencing hotel decisions, including cleanliness, location, reputation, price, value, service quality (e.g., staff friendliness and helpfulness), room comfort, and security (Chu and Choi 2000; Dolnicar and Otter 2003).

Complementing the hotel choice literature is a more limited literature on the choice to use non-hotel forms of accommodation (e.g., bed-and-breakfasts, homestays). Whereas the hotel choice literature has focused on the choice between hotel properties, the non-hotel choice literature has focused on the choice to use these alternative forms of accommodation more generally. This literature has tended to highlight the unique nature of the experience, rather than merely the practical attributes that dominate the hotel choice literature. For example, McIntosh and Siggs (2005) found that alternative accommodation guests enjoyed the unique character and homely feel of the accommodations, the personalized service and personal interaction with the hosts, and the opportunity to receive useful local knowledge from the hosts. Likewise, Stringer (1981) researched guests of British bed-and-breakfasts and found they were drawn by both the experience and the economical price. Similar findings highlighting the importance of interpersonal and authentic experiences, in addition to saving money, have been found in research on homestays (e.g., Wang 2007),

home swaps (e.g., Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis 2014), and CouchSurfing (e.g., Bialski 2011).

Innovation Adoption

The tourism accommodation choice literature highlights various motivations that may draw users to Airbnb. However, that literature has been largely atheoretical, so two innovation concepts—disruptive innovation and the diffusion of innovations—were used to add a conceptual foundation to the present study. These concepts were drawn on for additional guidance on variables to consider, and to better understand these different variables.

As described by Christensen (1997) and Christensen and Raynor (2003), a disruptive innovation is a product whose appeal does not derive from improved performance, which one may normally expect, as disruptive innovations rather underperform in comparison with prevailing products' key attribute(s). Nevertheless, disruptive innovations introduce an alternative package of benefits, generally centered on being cheaper, simpler, smaller, and/or more convenient. In other words, disruptive innovations are inferior “good enough” products when compared directly to existing competitors, but their unique set of attributes modifies the prevailing value proposition in a way that appeals to some consumers. The notion of disruptive innovation seems to apply well to Airbnb accommodations—they will seemingly underperform traditional accommodations when considering conventional attributes like cleanliness and security, but they tend to be relatively inexpensive, can foster a more authentic local experience, and can provide various benefits associated with staying in a home (e.g., household amenities) (Guttentag 2015). In other words, Airbnb offers a new value proposition that will appeal to some consumers.

This notion that disruptive products introduce an alternative package of benefits offers a basic explanation of the consumer demand for such products. It is essentially a Lancastrian approach of decomposing products into collections of attributes (Lancaster 1966). Nevertheless, the most concentrated look at disruptive innovation demand comes from Adner (2002), who modeled demand for computer disk drives and demonstrated the particular importance of unit price. Adner noted that as product performance levels become very high, market heterogeneity is reduced because most consumers are satisfied with performance, and the characteristics that previously distinguished them become decreasingly relevant. In turn, unit price, rather than a price-performance ratio, becomes increasingly important in encouraging adoption.

Additional insight into innovation adoption can be found in literature on the diffusion of innovations, which broadly examines the spread of innovations as they are increasingly adopted by members of a society. This literature has highlighted the significant influence certain innovation attributes have over adoption decisions. Of particular importance is

“relative advantage,” which refers to the perception that an innovation is better than its predecessor (Arts, Frambach, and Bijmolt 2011; Evanschitzky et al. 2012; Rogers 2003). Such benefits can vary widely and include financial implications, functional attributes, social prestige, convenience, satisfaction, or immediacy of reward (Rogers 2003). Whereas disruptive innovation tends to focus on objective functional performance, the broader perspective offered by relative advantage highlights important indirect advantages of product adoption. For example, the notion of prestige is reminiscent of tourism “bragging rights,” which Kerr, Lewis, and Burgess (2012) suggested influence some travelers’ destination choice. In addition to relative advantage, innovations are more appealing if they are “compatible” with an adopter’s values, beliefs, positive past experiences, and existing needs (Arts, Frambach, and Bijmolt 2011; Rogers 2003; Tornatzky and Klein 1982).

Beyond characteristics of the innovation itself, innovation adoption decisions also are influenced by characteristics of the potential adopter. “Innovativeness” refers to how early an individual tends to be in adopting innovations. Innovativeness is sometimes examined using chronological adopter segments (“early adopters,” “laggards,” etc.) (Rogers 2003), and sometimes as a continuum-based personality trait (Midgley and Dowling 1978). Although innovativeness has not received widespread attention from tourism scholars, a handful of studies have found different forms of innovativeness were positively associated with various purchase behaviors (Couture et al. 2015; Lee, Qu, and Kim 2007; San Martín and Herrero 2012). Innovativeness is very closely related to the notion of novelty-seeking (Hirschman 1980), which is a concept more common within the tourism literature. Conceptualized as a desire for new and unfamiliar stimuli (Lee and Crompton 1992; Snepenger 1987), novelty-seeking has been central to some classic tourism typologies (Cohen 1972; Plog 1974) and has been used in various tourism segmentation studies (e.g., Chang, Wall, and Chu 2006; Mo, Havitz, and Howard 1994).

Methods

Data Collection

Individuals who had used Airbnb during the previous 12 months were recruited to complete an online survey, with data collection beginning in July 2015 and concluding in October 2015. Two Amazon gift cards of US \$50 apiece (or its international equivalent) were offered as incentives, and were distributed in lottery draws. Respondents needed to have been significantly involved in the decision to choose Airbnb accommodation, and only one travel party member (from a respondent’s most recent Airbnb stay) could complete the survey.

Because Airbnb is relatively new, has only been used by a small proportion of the population, and has not been widely researched, the desired respondents exhibited

various characteristics of a “hard-to-reach” population (Marpsat and Razafindratsima 2010). A multiple-frame online non-random sampling approach therefore was deemed necessary. The majority of the respondents were recruited via six travel-related Facebook groups based around major Canadian cities, and consisting of thousands of members apiece. Additionally, respondents were recruited via Mechanical Turk (MTurk), an opt-in online panel that is increasingly being used in social science research. As recommended by Chen (2012) and Kittur, Chi, and Suh (2008), data quality from the MTurk responses was promoted by paying a relatively high compensation (these respondents were paid per completion, rather than entered in the lottery draws), including two verifiable questions, and restricting respondents to certain countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand). A handful of other sampling approaches additionally were used to further bolster and diversify the sample. These approaches involved publishing invitation messages on travel-themed Facebook pages, travel-themed Twitter feeds, and an Airbnb-focused page on the website Reddit; sending invitation messages to a small number of Airbnb hosts and asking them to forward the invitation to their recent guests; sending invitation messages to travel bloggers who had recently used Airbnb; and including a referral link at the end of the survey.

Although the sampling approach was non-random, the combination of different sampling frames was intended to reduce the overall study sample bias. Also, both Facebook and MTurk, from which the majority of the sample was drawn, have been recognized as recommendable sampling frames that produce high-quality data on a level that is generally comparable to or better than many common alternatives (Baltar and Brunet 2012; Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling 2011; Ramo and Prochaska 2012; Simons and Chabris 2012). Moreover, as compared to the general population, many of the biases characterizing users of websites like Facebook, MTurk, and Reddit should be consistent with biases found among users of an online service like Airbnb.

Survey Design

The survey items were primarily Likert scale and multiple-choice. The questions focused chiefly on a respondent’s most recent Airbnb stay in order to minimize confusion. A pretest was conducted with several prior Airbnb guests who were members of the principal researcher’s social circle, and it involved completing the survey and answering a series of open-ended questions regarding possible issues like confusion and fatigue. Questions regarding Airbnb use, trip characteristics, and sociodemographics were asked in a straightforward manner. However, household income level was asked using a Likert scale – “Well below average” to “Well above average” relative to a respondent’s home country – as this approach accommodated respondents from different countries earning income in different currencies.

Agreement with different potential motivations for choosing Airbnb was measured using a 17-item Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). As an exploratory study, the items were written uniquely for this research. They were based primarily on the previously described motivations that have been proposed in prior motivation research on Airbnb and the broader peer-to-peer short-term rental sector. In addition, some guidance was derived from the accommodation choice literature, especially studies looking at the choice to use alternative forms of accommodation. Finally, the concepts of disruptive innovation and the diffusion of innovations, and relevant studies on these topics, were relied on for additional direction when designing the scale. The 17 motivation items used pertained to six dimensions—price, functional attributes, unique and local authenticity, novelty, travel bragging, and sharing economy ethos.

A price item was framed in terms of Airbnb's comparatively low cost relative to other accommodation options, as this straightforward comparative price attribute is central to the notion of disruptive innovation (Adner 2002; Christensen 1997). Five items relating to functional attributes were included (e.g., location convenience, household amenities) and were based on the existing Airbnb and non-hotel accommodation choice literature (e.g., Guttentag 2015; McIntosh and Siggs 2005). Four items were included regarding the desire for unique and authentic local experiences (e.g., interaction with host/locals, staying in a non-touristy area). These items were again based on the existing Airbnb and non-hotel accommodation choice literature (e.g., Bialski 2011; Lamb 2011). Three items associated with novelty-seeking were included, based on Lee and Crompton's (1992) research on novelty-seeking in tourism. Those authors identified four novelty-seeking dimensions—thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation, and surprise—and one item associated with three of these dimensions was included, with boredom alleviation excluded because it applies more to travel (push) motivations than accommodation choice (pull) motivations. Three items related to the ethos of the sharing economy were included (e.g., Airbnb's environmental friendliness), and were based on the general sharing economy literature (e.g., Botsman and Rogers 2010) and Tussyadiah's (2015) peer-to-peer short-term rental study. Finally, one item on travel bragging was included, centered on tourists' potential desire to have an experience they could tell friends and family about. This item was based on prior use of travel bragging in segmentation studies by Cha, McCleary, and Uysal (1995) and Sirakaya, Uysal, and Yoshioka (2003).

Data Analysis

Various analyses were employed to answer the research questions guiding this study. All analyses were conducted using SPSS, Excel, and R software. To begin, basic descriptive statistics were used to obtain a general overview of the sample and the responses to the different survey items. Also,

respondents from the Canadian Facebook groups, MTurk, and all other sampling frames were compared along a series of variables using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Welch, and chi-square tests.

An exploratory factor analysis, using principal axis factoring extraction and a direct oblimin oblique rotation, was then run on the 17 Airbnb motivations to identify underlying factors, with the goal of easing interpretation of subsequent analyses of the motivation data. Although tourism researchers often simply extract factors with eigenvalues above one, this approach is problematic (Ledesma and Valero-Mora 2007), and was inappropriate for the present study because of the size of the communalities after extraction (Field 2013). Rather, guidance on the number of factors to extract was based on an examination of the scree plot and a parallel analysis performed using the *psych* package in R (Revelle 2015).

Subsequently, a cluster analysis involving the 17 motivation items was undertaken. Prior to conducting the cluster analysis, multicollinearity was assessed by verifying that no clustering variables exhibited correlations above 0.9 (Sarstedt and Mooi 2014). The cluster analysis employed the two-stage cluster approach (Punj and Stewart 1983) that has been used widely by tourism researchers (e.g., Chang 2006; Prayag and Hosany 2014). The two-stage cluster approach involves initially conducting a hierarchical cluster analysis and subsequently entering some of the resulting parameters into a k-means analysis. Ward's method with squared Euclidean distance was used for the agglomerative hierarchical clustering. The percentage change in heterogeneity within clusters in subsequent clustering stages, as indicated by the agglomeration coefficient, was initially examined for guidance on the optimal number of clusters to specify for the k-means analysis (Hair et al. 2014). Following the k-means analysis, the variance ratio criterion (Sarstedt and Mooi 2014) and hit ratios from discriminant analyses were used for guidance on the final number of clusters.

A variety of profiling variables then were used to compare the segments. Chi-square, one-way ANOVA, and Welch tests were conducted to assess differences between the segments. In cases of statistical significance, standardized residuals (chi-square), Gabriel's tests (one-way ANOVA), and Games-Howell tests (Welch) were used to better identify segment differences. The variables Number of Nights, Number of Other Guests, and Total Times Used Airbnb were logarithmically transformed prior to the analyses in order to account for a high positive skew. Also, to limit the influence of extreme values, six durations that exceeded 30 nights were changed to 31 prior to the analysis (Field 2013).

Results

Sample Profile

A total of 923 surveys were received. Data screening eliminated numerous surveys as a result of issues such as

incompleteness, carelessness (indicated by an especially short time spent on the survey or a high number of consecutive identical responses) (Curran 2016), and incorrect answers to the verifiable MTurk questions. The final sample used for the analyses consisted of 844 total respondents. Of these, 72.4% were derived from the Canadian travel-themed Facebook groups, 16.4% were derived from MTurk, 10.3% were derived from other sampling frames (e.g., Reddit, referrals), and 0.9% were of unspecified origin. When respondents from the Canadian Facebook groups, MTurk, and all other sampling frames were compared, significant differences were detected along some variables (e.g., gender, trip purpose), whereas for others the groups were found to be fairly similar (e.g., age, type of Airbnb accommodation used).

Characteristics of the overall sample can be observed in Table 1. As can be seen, 67.8% of the respondents were female, 81.9% were between the ages of 21 and 40, 92.8% had at least a university or college degree, and 77.8% perceived their household financial status as at least “just above average” in their home country. Owing to the sampling frames used, 74.3% of the respondents resided in Canada and 23.0% resided in the U.S. For their most recent Airbnb stay, 80.3% had been traveling for leisure, 59.7% were on an international trip, 18.1% perceived themselves as “backpackers,” 70.3% were staying in an entire home (rather than sharing a residence with the host), 62.5% were staying for between two and four nights, 75.5% were staying with between one and three other accompanying guests, and 57.6% were staying with a spouse or partner. Finally, 55.8% had used Airbnb no more than three times, 57.7% had first used Airbnb in 2014 or 2015 (data collection occurred between July and October 2015), and 9.9% had experience as Airbnb hosts.

Because this study used nonprobability sampling, to assess the general representativeness of the sample various sample characteristics were compared with those of Airbnb’s guest population that could be gleaned from the roughly 25 local economic impact reports that Airbnb has published (e.g., Airbnb 2015b), and a report on its guests during the summer of 2015 (Airbnb 2015a). Airbnb stated in its summer 2015 report that 54% of its guests were female (Airbnb 2015a), in comparison with 67.8% of the present study’s respondents. In the same report, Airbnb claimed that its average guest age was 35 (Airbnb 2015a), and if one estimates the mean age of the present study’s respondents using the midpoint of each age group (e.g., 35 for 31–40), the result is an average age of 33. Airbnb economic impact reports suggest that about 86% of its visitors are traveling for leisure, in comparison with 80.3% for the present study. Airbnb economic impact reports and claims to the media (Lu 2015) both have suggested that guests’ average length of stay is 4.5 nights, and the average length of stay for respondents in the present study was 4.54 nights.

Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was performed on the 17 Airbnb motivations. Initial examinations of the inter-item correlation matrix led to the removal of two items (“low cost” and “location convenience”) for which all correlations were much lower than the common threshold of 0.3 (Field 2013). Subsequently, an initial run of the exploratory factor analysis led to one item, unique (nonstandardized), cross-loading onto two factors with similar factor loadings, so this item also was removed.

The remaining 14 variables were shown to be appropriate for factor analysis—Cronbach’s alpha was 0.868 ($N = 814$), the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy had a very high value of 0.890, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin values for the individual items were all at least 0.736, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(91) = 4085.74$, $p < 0.001$). Parallel analysis recommended both four- and five-factor solutions, and the five-factor solution was chosen because it was more clearly suggested by the scree plot and because the four-factor solution combined two seemingly conceptually distinct factors in a way that led to fairly low factor loadings for one of the factor’s items. Moreover, because the goal of the factor analysis was to identify latent structures among the motivations in order to ease interpretation of the subsequent cluster analysis, the creation of more precise factors was preferable. The final five-factor solution was very clean and explained 69.1% of the total variance. All factor loadings easily exceeded the commonly used criterion of 0.32 (Tabachnick and Fidell 2013), except for one item with a loading of 0.26, yet even that value could still be considered significant given the size of the sample (Stevens 2009).

The factor analysis results can be observed in Table 2. The first factor, Interaction, explained a large share of the variance (38.4%), and consisted of two items associated with interacting with one’s host or other locals. The second factor, Home Benefits, explained 10.8% of the variance and consisted of three items associated with staying in a home. The third factor, Novelty, explained 8.7% of the variance and consisted of the three novelty items based on Lee and Crompton’s (1992) work and the single travel bragging item. The fourth factor, Sharing Economy Ethos, explained 6.0% of the variance, and consisted of the same three items originally proposed for this construct. Finally, the fifth factor, Local Authenticity, explained 5.3% of the variance, and consisted of two items associated with having an authentic local experience.

Cluster Analysis

Tourism segmentation research has frequently used a factor-cluster approach, in which variables are first reduced via factor analysis and then the resulting factor scores are used for the cluster analysis. However, this procedure is discouraged

Table 1. Sample Characteristics.

Characteristics	%	n	Characteristics	%	n
Gender			Type of Airbnb accommodation used		
Female	67.8	553	Entire place	70.3	586
Male	32.1	262	Private bedroom	27.6	230
Transgender	0.1	1	Shared space	2.2	18
Age			Nights		
≤20	1.1	9	1	9.5	79
21–30	52.3	437	2	22.0	183
31–40	29.7	248	3	23.6	196
41–50	8.0	67	4	16.8	140
51–60	5.6	47	5	9.7	81
≥61	3.3	28	6	5.4	45
Highest level of education			7	6.0	50
High school or less	7.2	59	8–29	5.7	47
University / college	62.6	510	≥30	1.2	10
Graduate / professional	30.2	246	Number of other guests		
Household financial status (relative to home country)			0	11.2	93
Well below average	1.0	8	1	50.4	417
Below average	5.4	42	2	12.3	102
Just below average	15.8	123	3	12.8	106
Just above average	46.9	365	4	5.7	47
Above average	27.7	216	5	4.3	36
Well above average	3.2	25	6+	3.3	27
Country of residence			Type of other guests (% of total sample)		
Canada	74.3	589	Spouse/partner	57.6	486
USA	23.0	182	Child(ren)	10.9	92
Other	2.8	22	Friend(s)	31.0	262
Trip purpose			Professional colleague(s)	2.0	17
Business	3.5	29	Total times used Airbnb		
Convention, conference, event	7.5	63	1	22.0	182
Leisure	80.3	673	2	16.7	138
Visiting friends/family	8.7	73	3	17.1	142
Destination region			4	10.9	90
Canada	23.0	194	5	8.9	74
Europe	28.9	244	6	5.9	49
USA	36.4	307	7	4.3	36
Other	11.6	98	8–10	7.5	62
Destination type			11+	6.6	55
Domestic	40.3	319	Year first used Airbnb		
International	59.7	473	2008–2010	4.0	33
Self-described “backpacker” on trip			2011	6.6	55
No	81.9	685	2012	12.7	105
Yes	18.1	151	2013	19.0	158
			2014	32.0	266
			2015	25.7	213
			Ever been an Airbnb host		
			No	90.9	758
			Yes	9.1	76

Note: “Business” signifies business (other than convention, conference, or other major event). “Shared space” refers to sleeping in a shared area, such as a futon in the host’s living room.

because a large quantity of meaningful variance is lost in the factor analysis (Dolnicar and Grün 2008). Fortunately, as per recommended respondent-to-variable ratios stated by

Dolnicar et al. (2014), the present study’s sample size was large enough to include all 17 motivation items in the cluster analysis.

Table 2. Factor Analysis of the Motivations to Choose Airbnb.

Factor Motivation	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalues	Pct. Variance Explained (Cumulative)	Cronbach's α	Average of the Mean Scores
Interaction		5.37	38.36	0.78	3.68
To interact with host, locals	.79		(38.36)		
To receive useful local info/tips from my host	.71				
Home benefits		1.51	10.79	0.65	4.42
For the large amount of space	.66		(49.15)		
For the access to household amenities	.65				
For the homely feel	.47				
Novelty		1.21	8.65	0.80	3.53
I thought the experience would be exciting	.78		(57.80)		
To do something new and different	.75				
To have experience I could tell friends/family about	.64				
I thought the experience would be unpredictable	.55				
Sharing Economy Ethos		.83	5.96	0.73	3.62
I wanted the money I spent to go to locals	.87		(63.76)		
Staying with Airbnb is environmentally friendly	.60				
I prefer the philosophy of Airbnb	.45				
Local Authenticity		.75	5.33	0.63	4.39
To have an authentic local experience	.71		(69.09)		
To stay in a non-touristy neighborhood	.26				

Note: All items were measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. For the Interaction and Local Authenticity factors, the reported Cronbach's α score is the "Cronbach's α based on standardized items," which is equivalent to the Spearman's-Brown coefficient and is a more appropriate reliability measure for two-item scales (Eisinga, Grotenhuis, and Pelzer 2013).

Initial clustering of the data resulted in cluster solutions that essentially grouped the respondents into segments of strong, medium, and low levels of agreement across all of the motivations. Such results appeared chiefly reflective of response-style effects associated with respondents' different baseline levels of agreement (Hair et al. 2014). Consequently, each individual's responses were standardized via within case z-scores, which is a recommended transformation in such circumstances (Hair et al. 2014; Schaninger and Buss 1986). Standardizing scores by case is fairly comparable to using correlation as a distance measure in hierarchical clustering (Hair et al. 2014; Sarstedt and Mooi 2014), and while it leads to some meaningful variance being lost, it can render a solution that is more interpretable, more heterogeneous, and more clearly related to external variables (Schaninger and Buss 1986).

Agglomeration coefficients were examined for guidance on the optimal number of clusters (Hair et al. 2014), but there was no clear cut-off point. Therefore, cluster centroids were saved for three, four, five, six, and seven-cluster solutions, and imported into a k-means analysis for further examination. Subsequently, based on the variance ratio criterion, hit ratios from discriminant analyses, and an examination of (non-transformed) variable means for various cluster solutions, a five-cluster solution was selected.

Table 3 displays the group means for the selected five-cluster solution, in addition to overall sample means. To ease interpretation, the motivations are organized in accordance with the factor analysis (Table 2). However, the three motivations that were excluded from the factor analysis were reinserted into Table 3, as they were included in the cluster analysis. The "low cost" and "location convenience" motivations were added to the top of the motivation list, and the "unique (non-standardization)" motivation was added to the Novelty factor upon which it loaded most heavily. Also to ease interpretation, the cell values were shaded based on their deviations from the sample mean for each variable, with darker shades indicating higher levels of agreement compared to the other segments. The F-values in Table 3 display the results of univariate ANOVAs comparing the mean scores for each segment. These values function primarily as indicators of the degree to which each motivation contributed to the final cluster solution (SPSS 2016). The associated *p*-values have not been included because in k-means analysis the clusters are selected to maximize differences between clusters, so the *p*-values should not be interpreted as tests of the hypothesis that the cluster means are equal (SPSS 2016).

Multiple discriminant analysis was used to help confirm the validity of the cluster solution. The five clusters were

Table 3. The Motivation-Based Cluster Solution.

Factor	Money Savers (n = 152 / 18.8%)		Home Seekers (n = 188 / 23.3%)		Collaborative Consumers (n = 154 / 19.1%)		Pragmatic Novelty Seekers (n = 175 / 21.7%)		Interactive Novelty Seekers (n = 138 / 17.1%)		Total (N = 807)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Motivation												
For its comparatively low cost	5.67		5.01		5.28		5.16		5.04		5.22	0.95
For the convenient location	5.17		4.91		4.88		5.03		4.93		4.99	1.00
Interaction												
To interact with host, locals	2.44		3.19		4.76		2.57		4.59		3.45	1.51
To receive useful local info/tips from my host	3.09		3.92		4.88		3.03		4.78		3.90	1.43
Home benefits												
For the large amount of space	3.64		5.20		3.53		4.37		3.64		4.14	1.39
For the access to household amenities	4.36		5.52		4.18		5.04		4.20		4.71	1.30
For the homely feel	3.13		5.05		4.66		4.54		4.51		4.41	1.30
Novelty												
I thought the experience would be exciting	2.88		3.66		4.17		4.78		4.89		4.06	1.29
To do something new and different	2.86		3.46		4.23		4.85		4.86		4.03	1.38
To have experience I could tell friends/family about	2.43		2.96		3.47		4.15		4.08		3.41	1.40
I thought the experience would be unpredictable	2.17		2.23		2.32		2.93		3.62		2.63	1.27
To have a unique (nonstandardized) experience	2.77		4.35		4.81		4.91		4.88		4.35	1.34
Sharing Economy Ethos												
I wanted the money I spent to go to locals	2.86		3.76		4.77		3.58		3.51		3.70	1.36
Staying with Airbnb is environmentally friendly	2.57		3.30		3.93		3.36		2.97		3.24	1.30
I prefer the philosophy of Airbnb	3.11		4.17		4.56		3.87		3.79		3.91	1.34
Local Authenticity												
To have an authentic local experience	3.23		4.47		5.08		4.56		4.96		4.45	1.29
To stay in a non-touristy neighborhood	3.26		4.39		5.11		4.61		4.18		4.32	1.41

Note: All items were measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The cluster mean scores were shaded according to their deviation from the sample mean, with darker shading indicating higher agreement. There are 10 shading intervals of 0.2 standard deviations each, except for the two extreme intervals that extend indefinitely.

Table 4. Summary of the Discriminant Analysis Results.

Function	Eigenvalue	Percent Variance	Cumulative Percent	Canonical Correlation	After Function	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	df	p
1	1.403	38.2	38.2	0.764	0	0.081	1995.223	68	<0.001
2	1.105	30.1	68.3	0.725	1	0.195	1298.127	48	<0.001
3	0.854	23.2	91.5	0.679	2	0.411	706.292	30	<0.001
4	0.312	8.5	100.0	0.487	3	0.762	215.660	14	<0.001

Note: 92.8% of original cases correctly classified.

used as the dependent variable, with the 17 motivation items acting as the predictor variables. Importantly, the discriminant analysis used the raw, nontransformed motivation scores, rather than the *z*-scores used in the cluster analysis. The discriminant analysis generated four discriminant functions, shown in Table 4. As can be observed, the four discriminant functions in combination significantly differentiated the groups, as did all other subsequent combinations generated by peeling away the functions one at a time. Also, the discriminant analysis correctly classified 92.8% of the cases, which is a high hit ratio that lends support to the cluster solution.

Before considering the different segments, it is worthwhile to describe the aggregate levels of agreement with the various motivations (Table 3). Respondents on average agreed with nearly all of the proposed motivations (3.5 was the mathematical midpoint of the six-point scale). By a fairly substantial degree, respondents agreed most strongly with the “low cost” motivation. That was followed by the “location convenience” and “household amenities” items. Agreement also was relatively high with the other two Home Benefits items and the two Local Authenticity items. Agreement with the Novelty items was mixed, as respondents moderately agreed with several items and disagreed with two others. Agreement with the Sharing Economy Ethos and Interaction items was fairly limited.

Cluster Profiles

Based on their motivations for choosing Airbnb, the five clusters were named Money Savers, Home Seekers, Collaborative Consumers, Pragmatic Novelty Seekers, and Interactive Novelty Seekers (Table 3). A variety of profiling variables were used to better understand the different segments, the results of which can be seen in Tables 5 and 6. With regards to demographics (Table 5), the segments differed significantly by age, but not by gender, highest level of education completed, or household financial status. When looking at trip characteristics of the most recent Airbnb stay (Table 5), the segments differed with regards to backpacker status, but not trip purpose or destination type. When considering accommodation usage characteristics of their most recent Airbnb stay (Table 6), the segments differed with

regards to the type of Airbnb accommodation used, the number of nights stayed in the Airbnb accommodation, the number of other guests present in the accommodation, and whether or not they were accompanied by children. The segments did not differ significantly with regards to whether or not they were accompanied by spouses/partners or friends. Finally, significant differences were found when looking at several variables related to Airbnb usage history (Table 6)—the total number of times they had used Airbnb, the year they first used Airbnb, and whether or not they had ever been an Airbnb host.

Money Savers

The Money Savers were chiefly attracted to Airbnb by its comparatively low cost. They agreed more strongly with this motivation than any other segment agreed with any other motivation. The Money Savers exhibited a neutral opinion or disagreement with most of the other motivations considered. Money Savers tended to be somewhat young, with 62.9% aged 30 and under (vs. a 53.2% average), and were significantly less likely than average to be traveling with children (3.3%, vs. a 10.3% average).

Home Seekers

The Home Seekers were especially motivated by the three Home Benefits items. They agreed more with these items than with the “low cost” item, representing the only instances in which a segment agreed with anything more than low cost. The Home Seekers were significantly older than average (23.7% aged 41 and older, vs. a 16.8% average), were the most well educated (35.4% held a graduate or professional degree, vs. a 29.7% average), and were significantly less likely than average to be backpackers (10.2%, vs. a 17.8% average). They also were significantly more likely than average to be renting an entire home (92.0%, vs. a 71.0% average), were using Airbnb for significantly longer stays than all other segments (5.72 nights, vs. a 4.24 average), had the highest average number of accompanying guests (2.27, vs. a 1.79 average), were the most likely to be staying with a spouse/partner (64.9%, vs. a 57.6% average), and were significantly more likely than average to be staying with children (22.3%, vs. a 10.3% average). They also had used

Table 5. Cluster Profiles: Demographics and Trip Characteristics.

	Money Savers	Home Seekers	Collaborative Consumers	Pragmatic Novelty Seekers	Interactive Novelty Seekers	Total	Chi-square
Gender (%)							$\chi^2(4) = 5.307$
Female	66.4	74.0	67.1	67.7	62.2	67.9	$p = 0.257$
Male	33.6	26.0	32.9	32.3	37.8	32.1	
Age, years (%)							$\chi^2(8) = 29.008$
≤ 30	62.9	41.9*	47.1	59.3	56.9	53.2	$p < 0.001$
31–40	20.5*	34.4	35.9	31.4	26.3	30.0	
≥ 41	16.6	23.7*	17.0	9.3*	16.8	16.8	
Highest level of education (%)							$\chi^2(8) = 12.346$
High school or less	8.2	5.0	3.4	8.3	11.8	7.2	$p = 0.136$
University / college	63.7	59.7	67.6	64.3	61.0	63.2	
Graduate / professional	28.1	35.4	29.1	27.4	27.2	29.7	
Household financial status (relative to home country) (%)							$\chi^2(8) = 5.306$
Well below / below / just below average	20.7	21.0	27.3	23.3	18.8	22.3	$p = 0.724$
Just above average	45.7	47.2	46.0	44.2	52.3	46.9	
Above / well above average	33.6	31.8	26.6	32.5	28.9	30.8	
Trip purpose (%)							$\chi^2(12) = 6.516$
Business	4.7	4.8	2.0	2.9	2.2	7.5	$p = 0.888$
Event	6.7	8.0	6.5	6.9	9.6	3.4	
Leisure	80.7	77.0	84.3	80.6	80.1	80.4	
Visiting friends/family	8.0	10.2	7.2	9.7	8.1	8.7	
Destination type (%)							$\chi^2(4) = 5.651$
Domestic	36.1	41.4	33.1	44.2	43.2	39.8	$p = 0.227$
International	63.9	58.6	66.9	55.8	56.8	60.2	
Self-described “backpacker” on trip (%)							$\chi^2(4) = 23.985$
No	82.6	89.8	75.0	87.4	73.0	82.2	$p < 0.001$
Yes	17.4	10.2*	25.0*	12.6	27.0*	17.8	

Note: In order to account for low expected cell values, some categories have been collapsed from the original survey. “Event” signifies attending a convention, conference, or other major event, and “Business” signifies business (other than convention, conference, or other major event). Asterisks signify cells that are significantly different from their expected values, as per their standardized residuals. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Airbnb on average more than any other segment (5.81 times, vs. a 4.56 average).

Collaborative Consumers

The Collaborative Consumers were attracted to Airbnb by a variety of motivations related to the sharing economy (i.e., collaborative consumption). They showed the highest levels of agreement with the three Sharing Economy Ethos items, in addition to comparatively high levels of agreement with the Interaction and Local Authenticity items. The Collaborative Consumers were somewhat older than most other segments (47.1% aged 30 and under, vs. a 53.2% average), and somewhat less affluent (27.3% characterized their household financial status as “just below average” or lower, vs. a 22.3% average). They also were somewhat more likely than average to be traveling internationally (66.9%, vs. a 60.2% average), significantly more likely than average to be backpacking (25.0%, vs. a 17.8% average), and significantly more likely than average to be staying in shared accommodation (55.2%, vs. a 29.0% average). Furthermore, Collaborative Consumers had the fewest number of accompanying guests (1.26, vs. a 1.79 average), had used Airbnb significantly more than several other groups (5.35 times, vs. a 4.56 average), and

were significantly more likely than average to have experience as an Airbnb host (14.5%, vs. a 9.4% average).

Pragmatic Novelty Seekers

The Pragmatic Novelty Seekers were distinguished by their comparatively strong agreement with the Novelty and Home Benefits motivations. The Pragmatic Novelty Seekers were somewhat young (59.3% aged 30 and younger, vs. a 53.2% average), and somewhat less likely than average to be backpacking (12.6%, vs. a 17.8% average). They also were significantly more likely than average to be renting an entire home (90.1%, vs. a 71.0% average), and had significantly more accompanying guests than some other segments (2.00, vs. a 1.79 average). The Pragmatic Novelty Seekers also had used Airbnb significantly fewer times than some other segments (3.71 times, vs. a 4.56 average).

Interactive Novelty Seekers

Finally, the Interactive Novelty Seekers were strongly motivated by the Novelty and Interaction motivations. They were significantly more likely than average to be backpacking (27.0%, vs. a 17.8% average) and staying in shared accommodation (47.4%, vs. a 29.0% average). They also were

Table 6. Cluster Profiles: Airbnb usage.

	Money Savers	Home Seekers	Collaborative Consumers	Pragmatic Novelty Seekers	Interactive Novelty Seekers	Total	Chi-square/ ANOVA/Welch Test
Type of Airbnb accommodation (%)							$\chi^2(4)=145.356$ $p<0.001$
Entire place	66.9	92.0 ^{***}	44.8 ^{***}	90.1 ^{**}	52.6 [*]	71.0	
Shared accomm	33.1	8.0 ^{***}	55.2 ^{***}	9.9 ^{***}	47.4 ^{***}	29.0	
Nights							$F(4, 387.73)=8.063$ $p<0.001$
M	3.85	5.72	4.03	3.85	3.39	4.24	
(SD)	(3.35)	(6.05)	(3.82)	(2.28)	(2.90)	(4.08)	
Number of other guests							$F(4, 345.04)=11.434$ $p<0.001$
M	1.76	2.27	1.26	2.00	1.50	1.79	
(SD)	(1.42)	(1.98)	(0.99)	(1.66)	(1.31)	(1.58)	
Accompanied by spouse/partner (%)							$\chi^2(4)=8.596$ $p=0.072$
No	46.7	35.1	46.8	38.9	47.1	42.4	
Yes	53.3	64.9	53.2	61.1	52.9	57.6	
Accompanied by child(ren) (%)							$\chi^2(4)=41.440$ $p<0.001$
No	96.7	77.7	93.5	92.0	91.3	89.7	
Yes	3.3 ^{**}	22.3 ^{***}	6.5	8.0	8.7	10.3	
Accompanied by friend(s) (%)							$\chi^2(4)=7.253$ $p=0.123$
No	63.8	68.6	76.6	65.1	69.6	68.6	
Yes	36.2	31.4	23.4	34.9	30.4	31.4	
Total times used Airbnb							$F(4, 787)=11.686$ $p<0.001$
M	4.22 ^{ab}	5.81 ^c	5.35 ^{bc}	3.71 ^a	3.43 ^a	4.56	
(SD)	(4.30)	(6.52)	(5.75)	(3.56)	(3.33)	(5.01)	
Year first used Airbnb							$F(4, 387.20)=8.148$ $p<0.001$
M	2013.46	2013.09	2013.24	2013.74	2013.78	2013.44	
(SD)	(1.46)	(1.46)	(1.48)	(1.21)	(1.28)	(1.41)	
Ever been an Airbnb host (%)							$\chi^2(4)=11.080$ $p=0.026$
No	94.0	87.6	85.5	93.6	92.7	90.6	
Yes	6.0	12.4	14.5 [*]	6.4	7.3	9.4	

Notes: The "Shared accomm" category combines respondents who stayed in a private bedroom or a shared space. Number of Nights, Number of Other Guests, and Total Times Used Airbnb were logarithmically transformed prior to the analysis, but the original mean scores are presented in the table above. Superscripts indicate groups that are significantly different according to the Total Times Used Airbnb variable based on Gabriel's test. Superscripts are not displayed for the Nights, Number of Other Guests, or Year First Used Airbnb variables because a Games-Howell post hoc test was used, due to the unequal variances, and this test does not produce homogeneous subsets. Asterisks signify cells that are significantly different from their expected values, as per their standardized residuals. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$.

accompanied by significantly fewer guests than some other segments (1.50, vs. a 1.79 average). The Interactive Novelty Seekers additionally had the shortest average length of stay (3.39 nights, vs. a 4.24 night average), and had used Airbnb a relatively small number of times (3.43 times, vs. a 4.56 average).

Discussion

This study provides valuable insights regarding the demand side of Airbnb. The multiple-frame sampling approach provided a sample size that was very sufficient for the planned statistical analyses, which demonstrates the tremendous opportunity that online channels offer today's researchers, and in particular researchers studying "hard-to-reach" populations. While some differences were detected between the individual samples, the samples were not overwhelmingly distinct, and for at least some characteristics the use of multiple sampling frames seemed to have helped mitigate individual sample biases to produce a more balanced overall

sample. Although the study used a nonrandom sample, numerous similarities identified between the study sample and Airbnb's guest population lend confidence to the representativeness of the sample, and in turn the generalizability of the findings.

The aggregate results regarding respondents' motivations to choose Airbnb demonstrate the broad range of motivations that draw guests to the service. An exploratory factor analysis identified several underlying motivation constructs drawing tourists to Airbnb, and a cluster analysis identified several distinct segments of Airbnb guests. The exploratory factor analysis grouped the motivations considered into five factors—Interaction, Home Benefits, Novelty, Sharing Economy Ethos, and Local Authenticity. The Interaction factor consisted of two items associated with interacting with one's host or other locals. It is understandable that this factor explained the largest share of the total variance, as interaction with Airbnb hosts will vary dramatically depending upon whether one is renting an entire home. This factor also suggests that, for Airbnb users, interaction with locals is conceptually distinct from the broader

motivation of authenticity-seeking, even though tourism research has often positioned local interaction as a component of tourism authenticity (e.g., Conran 2006; Kontogeorgopoulos 2003). The Home Benefits factor focused on items related to staying in a home, which is again quite logical because the benefits of renting an entire home should tend to be linked. The Novelty factor grouped together the three novelty-seeking items based on Lee and Crompton's (1992) novelty-seeking scale, thereby providing further confirmation that these three items represent part of a larger novelty-seeking construct. This result also supports the use of this construct in tourism accommodation research, even though it primarily has been used in more general tourism research. The inclusion of the travel bragging item in this factor is reminiscent of the recognition within the diffusion of innovations literature that social prestige can motivate innovation adoption (Rogers 2003). The Sharing Economy Ethos factor suggests the three included items—"money to locals," "environmentally friendly," and "philosophy of Airbnb"—do indeed form part of a broader construct related to the ethos of collaborative consumption, as described by Botsman and Rogers (2010), Chase (2015), and others. Finally, the Local Authenticity factor combined an authentic local experience item with a non-touristy neighborhood item, which is logical because a non-touristy neighborhood should contribute toward the experience of local authenticity, as demonstrated in research highlighting how authenticity is often associated with areas not frequented by tourists (e.g., Bott 2015; Maitland 2013).

The aggregate levels of agreement with the motivations show that Airbnb's comparatively low cost was easily the top motivation. This importance is consistent with the concept of disruptive innovation (Adner 2002; Christensen 1997), and with other research on Airbnb (Nowak et al. 2015), peer-to-peer short-term rentals (Tussyadiah 2015), and the sharing economy (Eckhardt and Bardhi 2015; Hamari, Sjöklint, and Ukkonen 2016). Such findings indicate Airbnb should be perceived by traditional accommodations as a low-cost competitor. This result also demonstrates that despite sharing economy rhetoric regarding ideals like sustainability and local consumption (e.g., Botsman and Rogers 2010; Chase 2015), it is the basic desire to spend less money that is often paramount. Location convenience was the second most strongly agreed with motivation, which is consistent with findings by Nowak et al. (2015). Nonetheless, this importance is perhaps unexpected because Airbnb accommodations tend to be scattered in residential neighborhoods rather than clustered like hotels in a downtown tourism core. It appears that many tourists may find it convenient to stay outside of a tourism core, such as to be in a particular area underserved by hotels (e.g., near a family member or an event site), or to enjoy the conveniences of residential areas (e.g., preferred restaurants, supermarkets, and shops). The desire to access household amenities, and the other Home Benefits motivations, also were agreed with quite strongly by the respondents. This finding is consistent

with research by Nowak et al. (2015) on Airbnb, and by Quinby and Gasdia (2014) on peer-to-peer short-term rentals. The importance of these attributes underscores a key distinction between Airbnb accommodations and traditional hotels, thereby highlighting part of the unique value proposition Airbnb has introduced.

The motivations that have just been described focus on Airbnb's practical benefits. In comparison, the experiential benefits tended to be agreed with less strongly. Of these benefits, agreement was strongest with the Local Authenticity items. This finding supports research by Guttentag (2015) and Lamb (2011), and it parallels the importance of authenticity for some other non-hotel accommodations like bed-and-breakfasts and CouchSurfing (e.g., Bialski 2011; Stringer 1981). The importance of staying in a non-touristy neighborhood suggests the "backstage" experience Airbnb guests may seek is not restricted to the accommodation itself, but also involves the broader neighborhood where the accommodation is located. Agreement with the Novelty items tended to be less than with the Local Authenticity items, indicating that the desire for local authenticity does not fully translate into a desire for unfamiliar experiences. Nevertheless, the moderate agreement with these items is still noteworthy, as the tourism literature has primarily considered novelty-seeking from the perspective of destination choice instead of accommodation choice. Also, the "unpredictability" item exhibited the highest disagreement, which suggests that although Airbnb users may wish to eschew the generic uniformity of hotels, they do not desire an accommodation full of unexpected surprises. Agreement with the three Sharing Economy Ethos items was quite neutral, which is relatively consistent with Tussyadiah's (2015) research on peer-to-peer short-term rentals, and with Kasim's (2004) finding that even tourists interested in sustainability are not necessarily inclined to base their accommodation choice on such attitudes. Also, agreement with the Sharing Economy Ethos items was lower than what one may expect based on sharing economy proponents who portray such ideals as directly underpinning sharing economy activity (e.g., Botsman and Rogers 2010; Chase 2015). Finally, agreement also was fairly neutral with the Interaction items. This finding is perhaps unsurprising given that most respondents had rented an entire home rather than sharing the accommodation with a host, but it again highlights how many Airbnb stays differ from what one may envision when thinking of the "sharing economy."

The results clearly indicate that Airbnb users are primarily attracted to the service by its practical advantages, whereas the experiential appeals are secondary. While this finding questions some of the more idealistic portrayals of the sharing economy, it also demonstrates that the sharing economy has innovatively produced some incredibly practical and desirable products. Nonetheless, the findings serve as a warning for tourism marketers, as the somewhat sexier motivations like authenticity and novelty may obfuscate the more

mundane, but also more important, motivations like low cost and amenities. Indeed, Airbnb's recent advertising mostly avoids any mention of cost savings or amenities, and rather focuses almost exclusively on the service's experiential side, and in particular its ability to provide authentic local experiences and facilitate local interaction (e.g., della Cava 2015). Possible explanations for this marketing approach include Airbnb wanting to focus its marketing on countering the hesitancy people may feel toward staying in a stranger's home; Airbnb wanting to move upmarket with more highly priced listings, which would be complicated by a budget reputation; and Airbnb wanting to position its brand as hip and exciting, which is easier to do with scenes of travelers laughing with locals than with images of household amenities. Regardless, Airbnb's marketing focus on local interaction is somewhat peculiar in light of this study's finding that respondents on average disagreed with the "interaction with host/locals" item, as such marketing imagery could discourage potential users who would feel Airbnb is too interactive.

The cluster analysis, which involved all 17 motivation items, identified five separate clusters—Money Savers, Home Seekers, Collaborative Consumers, Pragmatic Novelty Seekers, and Interactive Novelty Seekers. The Money Savers were chiefly attracted to Airbnb by its comparatively low cost. They also were somewhat young and unlikely to be traveling with children. Although the Money Savers were predominately motivated by cost savings, they should not be misconstrued as seeking the absolute cheapest accommodation, as they were far more likely than some other segments to have stayed in (generally more expensive) entire homes. Given Airbnb's diversity of listings, it is a segment that Airbnb should frequently appeal to. For Airbnb hosts, attracting Money Savers should of course involve pricing one's accommodation competitively. For hotels, Money Savers may be difficult to attract and retain at desirable rates, and it is doubtful they would exhibit hotel brand loyalty. Both Airbnb and hotels may have success targeting this segment with special promotions.

The Home Seekers were particularly attracted to Airbnb by household amenities, large space, and the homely feel that Airbnb accommodations can provide. They tended to be older, well educated, and were unlikely to be backpackers. They also were almost exclusively renting an entire home, and tended to be on long trips and in large travel parties, often staying with a spouse/partner or children. They also tended to have extensive Airbnb experience. For Airbnb and its hosts, Home Seekers represent an especially valuable segment because of their frequent Airbnb use, their long trip durations, and the secondary importance they place on cost. Consequently, it behooves Airbnb to market more directly to this segment. For Airbnb hosts to attract Home Seekers, they should highlight their accommodations' amenities and large size. Traditional hotels may struggle to appeal to Home Seekers, but extended stay hotels should be more attractive to this segment. However, because extended stay hotels are

less widespread, their locations may be inconvenient in comparison with what Home Seekers can find on Airbnb. Consequently, hotel companies would likely benefit from offering hybrid hotel properties with extended stay rooms in traditional hotels.

The Collaborative Consumers were especially motivated to use Airbnb by its sharing economy ethos, by the opportunity to interact with locals, and by the opportunity to have an authentic local experience. They tended to be older and somewhat less affluent. They additionally were more likely than average to be backpacking, and far more likely than average to have stayed in shared accommodation. They also tended to be in smaller travel parties, have extensive Airbnb experience, and were more likely than average to have Airbnb hosting experience. Collaborative Consumers embody the profile that many seem to have in mind when thinking about Airbnb—tourists looking to have an authentic local experience and interact with locals, often by sharing a host's home. Airbnb's marketing is already tailored to this segment. Airbnb hosts looking to attract Collaborative Consumers should highlight their ability to provide backstage and off-the-beaten-track experiences, such as by offering local tips or providing a homemade local food dish. Collaborative Consumers are a segment that hotels are probably content to relinquish, but hostels and bed-and-breakfasts should focus intently on this segment, as their offerings align better with Collaborative Consumers' motivations for choosing Airbnb.

The Pragmatic Novelty Seekers were attracted to Airbnb by a combination of Novelty and Home Benefits. Pragmatic Novelty Seekers represent something of a novelty-seeking variant of the Home Seekers, although the profiles of the two segments were somewhat distinct. The Pragmatic Novelty Seekers were relatively young, almost exclusively renting an entire home, and had limited Airbnb experience. Airbnb and its hosts should appeal to Pragmatic Novelty Seekers by focusing on the perceived excitement, uniqueness, and practicality associated with Airbnb accommodations. Boutique hotels and other independently branded properties would likely appeal to this segment more than traditional hotels, as Pragmatic Novelty Seekers appear interested in a novel product beyond what traditional hotels may provide. However, this segment's interest in household amenities highlights a weakness for competing hotel properties.

The Interactive Novelty Seekers exhibited comparatively strong agreement with the Novelty motivation items, in addition to the Interaction motivations. The Interactive Novelty Seekers somewhat parallel the Collaborative Consumers in the same way that the Pragmatic Novelty Seekers parallel the Home Seekers. The Interactive Novelty Seekers were more likely than average to be backpacking and staying in shared accommodation. They also tended to be on short trips and had relatively little Airbnb experience. The marketing implications associated with the Interactive Novelty Seekers have

essentially been covered in the discussions of the Collaborative Consumers and Pragmatic Novelty Seekers.

The starkest motivating factor differentiating the segments was the Interaction factor, with which the Collaborative Consumers and Interactive Novelty Seekers agreed and the Money Savers, Home Seekers, and Pragmatic Novelty Seekers generally disagreed. This finding is consistent with the exploratory factor analysis, which found that the Interaction factor explained more variance than any other. The influence of the Interaction factor on the segmentation results was very closely related to the type of accommodation used, as Home Seekers and Pragmatic Novelty Seekers almost exclusively had stayed in entire homes, whereas Collaborative Consumers and Interactive Novelty Seekers were far more likely than average to have stayed in shared accommodations. This distinct appeal between Airbnb's entire homes and shared accommodations suggests that, to a degree, Airbnb offers two distinct products. This situation creates complexity for Airbnb marketers and arguably demonstrates a need for Airbnb to market its products differently. Airbnb eventually may develop sub-brands that could be marketed independently, such as Airbnb Explore (for shared accommodations), Airbnb Homes (for entire home rentals), Airbnb Pro (for rentals aimed at business travelers), Airbnb Lux (for high-end rentals), and Airbnb Exotic (for exotic accommodations like treehouses).

Conclusion

Airbnb has rapidly shifted the entire tourism accommodation landscape by introducing an innovative new product to the sector. Nonetheless, there is limited understanding of why so many tourists choose this novel service instead of traditional accommodation options. This study sheds some important light on this question by showing the strongest motivations tend to involve cost and other practical considerations, whereas the experiential motivations are generally secondary. The study also importantly identifies and profiles five distinct motivation-based segments of Airbnb users, and discusses various associated practical implications.

There are several limitations to this study, beginning with the use of a non-probability sample. The similarity found between the overall sample and the Airbnb user population gives reasonable confidence to draw generalizable insights, yet the potential for biases within the sampling frames should be considered. Moreover, the study involved an almost exclusively North American sample. Additionally, the 17 possible motivations considered do not represent an exhaustive list of reasons people may choose Airbnb. Furthermore, the motivation scale could benefit from additional items covering cost savings and location, as these were the items with which respondents agreed most strongly, and they did not load onto any of the extracted factors.

This study also highlights numerous avenues for future research. The list of 17 motivations could be expanded with

additional items, and repeated measurement with the utilized scale could test the validity of the five factors that were detected. It also may be beneficial to use alternative methods, such as rank ordering, to assess the importance of the motivations. Additionally, results from similar Airbnb segmentation research could be compared with the present study to help gauge the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, it would be useful to conduct longitudinal research that tracked Airbnb users' motivations over time, as such research would gauge the stability of the segments that were identified. There also are multiple ways to build on this research through comparisons with users of other accommodation types, such as hotels, hostels, bed-and-breakfasts, or other peer-to-peer short-term rental services. Finally, a greater understanding of the decision process surrounding Airbnb choice also would be quite beneficial.

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Author Biographies

Daniel Guttentag is an Assistant Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Ryerson University. His research focuses primarily on Airbnb and the broader peer-to-peer tourism accommodation sector.

Stephen Smith is a Professor in the School of Hospitality, Food, and Tourism Management at the University of Guelph, and a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. His research interests include tourism statistical systems, tourism satellite accounts, tourism policy, and tourism research methods.

Luke Potwarka is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. His research focuses on consumer behaviour related to sport events.

Mark Havitz is a Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. His research interests focus on consumer behaviour, marketing, finance, and management.